

# A STUDY OF THE FIRE SERVICE MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Executive Development

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## ABSTRACT:

The problem identified in this research project was the fire and rescue agency faces increased competition for limited public revenue and therefore must develop a method for gaining support of programs and staff.

The primary purpose of this research was to find effective management and marketing techniques and determine how the fire and rescue agency should utilize them to achieve greater public and political support.

The research methodology used was the descriptive method. It involved using surveys to determine the way that the fire and rescue agency should market and manage its services to enhance its image. Literature from within and outside the fire and rescue agency was reviewed and analyzed to answer three research questions:

- 1) How do you market the fire and rescue agency to meet customer needs and expectations?
- 2) What management techniques should the fire and rescue agency use to market the organization?
- 3) How can the fire and rescue agency enhance its image to increase public support?

Surveys were distributed to members comprising the forty neighborhood associations within the city of Peoria. Twelve questions were utilized for the purpose of compiling and evaluating the wants and needs of members within the neighborhood associations. Results of the survey indicated the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency should advertise its services to the community, develop a

marketing strategy, and seek input from the community. In addition, various innovative ideas were offered for implementing new types of services.

Based on the surveys and the literature review, specific recommendations were made to help fire executives manage more effectively, improve customer service, and solidify the fire and rescue agency's image through public support.

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## INTRODUCTION:

The tradition of just fighting fires is no longer acceptable if fire departments are to survive the next millenium. The number of fires has significantly decreased over the years. This has resulted in a demise of public support for fire services. In addition, fire departments face increased competition with other governmental agencies as well as the private sector for limited public revenue (Drick, 1996).

To compete with the private sector, the fire departments need to focus on the consumer. The organizations must do a paradigm shift from providing traditional fire services to satisfying the consumer's needs. To accomplish this, fire departments must find out when and why the consumer contacts the organization. At the same time, they must find out what other services the consumer would like implemented.

Changing from providing services to satisfying needs through the services provided involves restructuring fire departments at all levels. The organization should take heed of the private sector's success and integrate some of the management techniques the private industry utilizes. This includes fostering a positive environment where employees take pride in their work and are encouraged to make suggestions for the betterment of the organization.

The public needs to become more aware of the services fire departments provide. Therefore, management must develop a strategic marketing plan. Implementation and control of a marketing strategy will increase visibility and thus enhance awareness of the services offered.

Most importantly, the public must think of fire departments as the organization to contact when faced with an emergency situation. In order to accomplish this, fire departments must reexamine the image they portray. Management must establish what role it sees fire departments fulfilling in the future and adequately convey this outlook to the public. Many fire departments focus on changing their organization's name and mission statement to reflect the services they provide (i.e. Fire and Rescue Agency).

The Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency has an impassioned desire to favorably influence the public and city council members to encourage their continued support of programs and staff. Changes in the political and social environment require the agency to become proactive in marketing its services. Currently, the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency does not have formal goals and objectives to gain public and political support.

A descriptive research method using surveys was utilized to answer the research questions. The purpose of this research project was to find effective management and marketing techniques and determine how the fire and rescue agency should utilize them to achieve greater public and political support of programs and staff.

The following research questions were answered:

1. How do you market the fire and rescue agency to meet customer needs and expectations?
2. What management techniques should fire executives use to market the fire and rescue agency?

3. How can the fire and rescue agency enhance its image to increase public support?

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE:

In the early years of the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency, neither the fire prevention department nor the universal building code existed. As a result, the number of building fires was very high. Companies were kept busy by just fighting fires; and the public was greatly appreciative of the protection they received. Therefore, the agency found little need to concern itself with anything but providing this traditional service.

However, with the introduction of strict building codes and the advent of modern technology, the deep tradition of the fire department has been forced to change. This change is reflected in the multitude of fire departments that are altering their names to incorporate the other services they provide (i.e. Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency).

Since fire departments rely on public funds to operate they should be receptive to what the public wants and expects from them. They must now view the public as the customer. "Customer needs, perceptions, and feelings begin to design and drive how the fire service delivery system looks and behaves" (Brunacini, 1996, pg. 97).

This means the fire service needs to adapt. The days of fire departments being reactive in responding to emergency situations are history. The fire service has to become proactive with relation to its "product" of saving lives and property (Meister, 1992).

The fire and rescue agency must develop a strategic marketing plan to gain public support. The marketing plan will require the support of all personnel.



“Convincing the ‘troops’ may be all in the approach” (Beresford, 1994, p 17). The fire service needs to adapt a more businesslike approach to customer service. It must promote customer service through the utilization of a strategic marketing approach.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

The literature review revealed there was a need to change the way the fire and rescue agency markets its services. Research indicated the agency must identify desired public services and develop a cohesive managerial plan. The plan must address the issue of achieving future support of new innovative proposals.

With tight budgetary constraints, public fire agencies face competition from private corporate providers and other governmental agencies for public support (Drick, 1996). Lucrative budgets do not exist; and budgetary cutbacks threaten reductions in manpower, services, and equipment. Therefore, the fire and rescue agency must develop a strategic marketing plan to illustrate to the public how the fire department can provide emergency medical service that is better, faster, and more economical than the private sector.

While the fire and rescue agency of yesterday did meet the public's expectations, the organization can not rely on its past image of just fighting fires. To compete for a fair share of the city budget, the agency must utilize new innovations in technology and adapt to legal concerns, political decisions, and economical issues.

The general public has become more sophisticated and demanding of service and convenience. "The public has come to expect innovative services it was once just happy to have. The fire and rescue agency must relate to customers in a manner that reflects this change" (Paulsgrove, 1992, pg. 124).

The private industry has effectively responded to the changing influences and remains competitive in the market place (Northcutt, 1996). The reason being, private service agencies are uniformly looking for ways to provide satisfactory levels of service, customer service. The customer has extended this to mean a satisfactory level of benefit.

The fire and rescue agency must do a paradigm shift from providing the traditional fire services to satisfying the consumer's needs. In the past, community pressure has dictated the fire fighting industry's service of distinguishing fires, saving lives, and salvaging property. As a result, customer service has not received much attention in the fire service business. "There has been very little writing, training, direction, and follow up as far as a focus on customer service" (Brunacini, 1997, pg. 77).

"Before customer service can become a way of life, the feeling that change is unnecessary has to be overcome" (Templeton, 1996, pg. 58). For years the fire and rescue agency's objectives were drawn up around being reactive and responding to needs based on emergency situations. However, research indicates that a very small percentage of customers actually use fire and rescue services in a calendar year (Seidel, 1997). Therefore, the fire and rescue service needs to reexamine its business. The organization can not continue to operate as an entity that relies solely on the provisions of emergency services.

If the fire service is to survive, it should take heed of the private sector's success and integrate some of the management techniques the private industry

utilizes. Firefighters often believe that concepts the civilians developed and implemented in the private industry do not apply in the “real world”. “Fire service executives know what the rest of the organization might not: that as an industry, we live on an island in the sea of reality”(Templeton, 1996, pg. 58). Those who believe that customer service is only important in the private sector have not yet accepted the reality that the private sector is actually taking over emergency service response in many communities. Even without private competition there’s competition from other city departments and government entities for limited tax dollars.

“Due to future changes in the economy and increasing citizen expectations, competition will be a fact of life for all” (Templeton, 1996, pg. 58). The fire and rescue agency must identify and recognize the competition so it can position its product competitively. Better price, quality, and location are obvious attributes of a competitive fire and rescue agency. The organization must understand both what’s at stake and what happens to those who refuse to change.

Once we get over feeling special because our business is public safety; once we get past believing that only we have the expertise to really evaluate our service; and once it finally soaks in that we have customers and competitors just like private industry, the solution really becomes fairly basic. (Paulsgrove, 1996, pg. 49)

The fire and rescue agency must commit to changing the attitude of the whole organization. “Bridging the gap between the community’s perspective and

ours can't be ignored just because we're the experts: it's the commitment that will define a competitive fire service in the future " (Paulsgrove, 1996, pg. 49).

Departments must strive to provide excellent customer service because it is right, not because it is the right thing to do. It takes dedication. It takes hard work. Most importantly, it requires the commitment of the entire organization.

While the change begins with leadership, it must propagate to all levels of the organization. It is impossible to maintain a customer service initiative over time if that initiative does not come from deep within" (Paulsgrove, 1992, pg. 126). "Convincing the 'troops' may be all in the approach " (Beresford, 1994, pg. 17). The degree of importance that management places on customer service directly influences the employees.

Leadership's vision should be tied to the organization's core values. Programs that are based on a specific person struggle when that person leaves. However, programs that are based on the organization's fundamental values will survive even massive personnel changes, so long as values are passed from generation to generation. The strategy may change, but the principles remain consistent.

Public persona is as much a part of a project as the product itself. "Values determine who we are and what we do, both as individuals and as organizations" (Paulsgrove, 1992, pg. 126). What the fire and rescue agency does determines the organization's value to and acceptance in the community. Citizens are most likely going to base their impressions of the fire department on the single encounters they have with its representatives.

“Management can not control the quality of the ‘product’ when the product is service. Quality is in the hands of the workers who deliver the service” (Paulsgrove, 1992, pg. 122). Employees are department ambassadors any time they are in public. Managers can only affect the quality of the service indirectly, by inspiring and motivating those serving the consumer. “ When employees are treated with dignity and respect, they are more inclined to treat customers in the same manner” (Paulsgrove, 1992, pg. 127).

Careful research into public opinion is essential in the effort to gain acceptance. The fire and rescue agency’s task is to educate all employees to recognize the merits of the services it provides. Effective marketing programs are essential to selling the idea of the project to the responsible government authorities

“The fire and rescue agency’s essential mission and number one priority is to deliver the best possible service to its customers” (Brunacini, 1997, pg. 77). Many fire service executives have come to realize that a commitment to customer service is the only way to succeed and therefore have introduced customer service initiatives. “It’s easy for departments to slip into a subtle trap of letting the task, rather than the citizens they serve become the focus of attention” (Paulsgrove, 1992, pg. 126). Profit in the private sector and successes in the public sector are both linked to matching their services with the customers’ needs.

“Building a competitive fire service suggests a change from evaluating ourselves to evaluating our services from the community’s perspective”

(Paulsgrove, 1996, pg. 49). The fire service needs to pay close attention to its customers. They have special needs. It is imperative that the fire service representatives ask and show willingness to listen rather than impose values. After all, it is the customers, not the service providers, who define what constitutes good customer service.

Marketing is adopting the customer's perspective on any given business. Marketing should not be narrowly construed as the process of selling products but more broadly understood as satisfying human wants and needs. Fire service executives must persuasively demonstrate that they have identified the customers' unfilled wants and needs. The fire and rescue agency can use the collected market information to garner public support and financial backing for a project.

Fire executives must understand the total marketing concept: finding out what the customer wants, producing it, and persuading the customer to purchase it. Background in, relevant experience of, and familiarities with the latest changes in the fire fighting industry affect the agency's ability to respond to the community.

Good marketers do more than offer customers products they already know they want. Fire executives must seek to create a new demand by either making customers aware of new needs or by creating dissatisfaction with old products that may no longer be optimal in the face of new technology. Market research helps generate the ideas for a concept that will satisfy demand. Structured research provides the discipline, fuels the logic, and helps establish the criteria.

The best ideas come from creative dreaming balanced by knowledge of the industry and trends. Brainstorming, the nominal group process, the Delphi method, environmental scanning, focus groups, and surveys are all techniques used within the private sector for generating and testing ideas for a project. These techniques are sufficiently systematic and precise to help generate good ideas without making exorbitant demands on limited time and money.

The key to implementing these techniques is a strategic plan. Strategic planning consists of formulating goals and determining courses of action to achieve these goals. The question, where do we want to go, is at the heart of the strategic planning process (Fire, 1997). The question asks members of the planning team and those representing the rest of the organization to determine the organization's goals for the future. The toughest part of the strategic planning process is convincing the organization that the possibilities are limitless (Fire, 1997). Management should utilize the strategic planning techniques with an open mind. The objective is not to look for confirmation of an initial idea. New ideas and reshaped ideas will emerge.

To use market research effectively for a project, management should have a clear idea of why they want to undertake the project. Management actions set the example. "Everyone who has contemplated total quality service knows that without upper management support, all efforts are doomed to failure" (Templeton, 1996, pg. 59). Managers risk losing credibility if they don't take responsibility for clearly communicating the expectations, criteria, and boundaries when they delegate a task.



Management has three basic tasks to perform: establish the standards the employees are required to meet, supply the wherewithal the employees need to meet those standards and requirements, and spend time encouraging and helping those employees to maintain those standards and requirements. (Templeton, 1996, pg. 59)

The danger of initiatives and programs is that they allow personnel to relax when a goal is accomplished. While employees pat one another on the back, customer expectations march on. The most effectively managed organizations continually strive for perfection in everything they do. Once the organization achieves a superior level of customer service, it does not take time to relax. Products, markets, the organizations, the competition, and the environment are continually changing. Top quality service needs to be sustained, reinforced, and never allowed to slip. Marketing is a continuous process.

A marketing strategy is a detailed plan for meeting marketing objectives. The fire and rescue agency must develop a dynamic marketing strategy, a strategy that continues to evolve. It must include a clear statement of the target market, measurable objectives for serving that market, a marketing budget, and the marketing mix (product, place, price and promotion).

Management must implement and control the marketing strategy. Skillful management is required to staff, monitor and control implementation of the marketing plan. Management selects, motivates, and manages the team needed to get the job done. Controlling creative planning and active selling without stifling staff initiative is critical to successful implementation.

The success of implementing such a new concept will be tied directly to a strong labor and management relationship. "Get your acts collectively together or the changes in the fire service will not be controlled by you, but will be forced upon you" (Henson, 1995, pg. 83). To do this, both labor and management must cooperate. The fire and rescue agency's future lies inherently upon both labor and management accepting responsibility for the future.

The homogeneous complexion of the firefighter is rapidly changing. "How management relates to its firefighters is crucial to the future because they are the future" (Henson, 1995, pg. 83). The only limitations to the services provided are the limits of the agency's collective imagination. Given a true commitment from both labor and management, the fire and rescue agency can create a new culture within the department. This culture will ensure an adequate response to changing community needs, increase employee satisfaction, and ensure the agency's survival as a valued emergency service provider.

The fire department would be wise to look at how the police department has gained public support. Police departments are usually more successful than the fire departments when it comes to budgets. The reason the police departments have been successful is due, to a great extent, on the increasing visibility and interaction with the communities they serve. The interaction has resulted in increased investments in police substations and neighborhood centers.

In every city there is a fire station right in the middle of virtually every community, yet it's often removed from those who live there. The fire station

becomes a second home to the firefighters who spend a third of their lives there. However, firefighters often don't know, or care to know their neighbors. This attitude has been a luxury the fire department can no longer afford. Effective customer service is dependent upon knowing who your customers are and what they need.

There are many examples of various departments instituting new programs to increase involvement with the community. The Austin Texas Fire Department started a program called "Out of the station...into the community". Some firefighter initiatives that have been successful in Austin are:

1. A firefighter volunteered to design and build a Japanese garden for an elementary school in a low-income area.
2. Two fire companies helped with a tailgate party to recruit adult volunteers for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Austin. Several Austin firefighters have volunteered to be Big Brothers, spending hours every week being a friend and mentor to a child who needs one.
3. Firefighters at a station in a low income area held a party to celebrate the end of the school year.
4. Dozens of Austin firefighters volunteer to handout bags at grocery stores the Saturday before Thanksgiving to encourage shoppers to purchase donations for a local food bank. (Brandewie, 1996, pg. 64)

Assistant Chief Timothy S. Wall of the Wallingford, Connecticut Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, lists ten ideas for fire department community involvement.

1. Plan an annual house- Show off your firehouse, fire equipment and fire trucks. You also might want to plan a small demonstration.
2. Exhibit at a fair – If your community has carnivals or some type of community celebration, bring some apparatus so people can walk around, sit in, or even handle some small equipment.
3. Organize a sporting event and donate proceeds to charity – Have your company challenge the other local fire or police department in your community.
4. Hold a holiday food drive – A month prior to the holiday season, organize a food drive at your firehouse.
5. Produce a fire company newsletter – Offer the community safety tips within the quarterly publication.
6. Give rewards for being an active volunteer.
7. Produce a fire department video – Suggestions for a short video include: how to become a member and what to do in the event of an emergency.
8. Participate in parades – Show off company equipment. This also provides an excellent opportunity for the company to wear its dress uniforms.
9. Offer public awareness training – Check with local developers or real estate agents about abandoned buildings that can be used to demonstrate ladders, axes, and power saws. Invite local public officials and the news media to attend.

10. Plan fire prevention education – fire company personnel provide excellent speakers for community, church, or school groups gatherings. (Wall, 1995, pg. 3)

For the last ten years, Chicago firefighters have welcomed kids inside the firehouse. Entry requires adherence to a strict behavior code. No swearing or drugs are permitted. Faces and hands must be washed. Minds must be open to talks about discipline and education. There's a place for students to do homework and to stay out of harm's way.

These are only a few examples of how firefighters are working to make their communities better places to live. They provide examples of how fire service organizations can expand services. The opportunities to expand into the community must be sought and seized. The future of the fire service demands it to survive.

## PROCEDURES:

The purpose of this research project was to find effective management and marketing techniques and determine how the fire and rescue agency should utilize them to achieve greater public and political support of programs and staff.

Surveys were distributed to members comprising the forty neighborhood associations within the City of Peoria. Membership in each association ranges from thirty to one hundred individuals. The chairperson of each neighborhood association was contacted and informed of the survey's overall purpose. The chairperson was then asked to assist in distributing the surveys to each member. It was communicated to them that information acquired from the surveys would enhance the efforts of the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency in understanding and meeting the citizen's needs and expectations. Sixty eight percent of the twelve hundred surveys distributed were returned. Results of the survey enabled the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency to refine its managerial structure and develop a comprehensive marketing strategy.

Twelve questions were utilized for the purpose of compiling, evaluating, and determining the wants and needs of members within the neighborhood associations.

Literature searches were conducted at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Documents were obtained from the Peoria Public Library by use of the MINITEX Library Information Network. Reference material available at the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency was also reviewed.

Literature was reviewed to reveal marketing and managerial strategies relevant to the fire service. The literature review focussed on methods to evaluate community expectations and develop a plan to satisfy those needs.

The project was completed by researching and interpreting the published ideas of other fire service agencies, obtaining and evaluating data from the survey, and making specific recommendations for the fire and rescue agency to enhance its involvement in customer service.

## RESULTS:

The results of the survey were compiled, evaluated, and used to determine the wants and needs of members within the forty neighborhood associations throughout the City of Peoria.

1. Are you aware of all the services the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency provides? [452] Yes [364] No
2. Should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency advertise its services to the community? [512] Yes [304] No
3. Should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency charge for some services as an alternative source of funding? [382] Yes [434] No
4. What services would you like to see the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency expand?
  - [237] Fire Prevention and Education
  - [ 76 ] Hazardous Materials
  - [393] Emergency Medical Service
  - [ 68 ] River Rescue
  - [ 43 ] Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. At what level of education should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency become more involved?
  - [347] Kindergarten
  - [318] Grades 1 - 4
  - [ 93 ] Grades 5 - 8
  - [ 58 ] Grades 9 - 12
6. How can the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency better meet the needs of your Neighborhood Association?
  - [319] Become members
  - [381] Have public meetings at the fire station
  - [ 52 ] Attend block parties
  - [ 55 ] Send out questionnaires
  - [ 9 ] Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. In the last 12 months, how many times have you needed the services of the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency?
  - [573] 0 [202] 1 [ 36] 2 [ 5 ] 3 or more
8. How would you rate the quality of service provided by the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency?
 

[188] Excellent	[295] Above Average
[316] Average	[ 17 ] Poor



9. Do you feel the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency needs to develop a marketing strategy? [539] Yes [277] No
10. Should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency seek more input from the community? [701] Yes [115] No
11. How could the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency gain more information concerning the expansion of public services?
  - Attend monthly Neighborhood Meetings
  - Send out questionnaires
  - Attend school board meetings
  - Be involved in political action committees
  - Interact with elected city council representatives
  - Set up public information booths at events such as: fairs, Steamboat Days, and the Taste of Peoria
12. What innovative ideas would you like to see implemented by the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency?
  - Cadet Firefighting Program
  - Home safety inspections for senior citizens
  - Weekend boater safety classes
  - Citizens Fire Academy
  - Firefighter paramedics giving various shots in the home
  - More cost effective medical transport

## DISCUSSION:

With the number of fires decreasing each year, it becomes obvious that the fire and rescue agency can no longer be able to rely on its past image. Increased technology in the fire service in areas such as Hazardous Materials and Emergency Medical Service has required a higher standard of professionalism. With that knowledge, education of personnel is a key to properly implementing the program designed.

The research indicated the fire and rescue agency must first identify desired public services and then develop a cohesive managerial plan. The plan must seek support of future innovative programs if the fire and rescue agency is to survive.

The fire and rescue agency must design a program that will gather information pertaining to community needs. The information should be accumulated through a suitable information gathering source, i.e. surveys. Once the information is obtained, the best method(s) should be chosen to implement the plan and deliver what the public wants.

The three research questions were investigated and answered:  
Objective 1) How do you market the fire and rescue department to meet customer needs and expectations?

Building a competitive fire service suggests a change in evaluating our services from the community's perspective. Customers have special needs that they will be happy to share if fire service representatives would only ask and show willingness to listen.

Fire service executives must understand the total marketing concept. In order to launch a successful marketing plan, fire executives must first identify the customers' needs and expectations. Executives must find out what the customer wants, produce it, and persuade the customer to buy into it. Survey respondents suggested the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency gain information by: attending monthly neighborhood meetings, attending local school board meetings, sending out questionnaires, becoming involved in political action committees, interacting with elected city council representatives, and setting up public information booths.

The best way to get the word out is to establish a strategic advertising campaign. The advertising campaign will assist in persuading those who control the allocation of the agency's funding. The foundation for a successful marketing campaign is built upon creating a good working relationship with the media.

Objective 2) What management techniques should fire executives use to market the fire and rescue agency?

To be effective in creating a strategic marketing plan will require a good labor and management relationship. Managers affect the quality of the service indirectly. They inspire and motivate the personnel serving the customer. How personnel are treated impacts the fire and rescue agency's ability to provide quality service to the public. Management must set the example. When personnel are treated fairly, they are more likely to provide the service the customer wants and deserves.

The agency must have an open line of communication from the top down. Labor will have to trust management before it can be influenced as to the importance of customer service and other innovative ideas. Management must continually motivate the personnel to strive for top quality service. It should encourage employees to be creative in developing new ways of satisfying customer needs.

Management must develop a vision for the future of the fire and rescue agency. They must first identify where they intend to head the agency and then implement a strategic plan to achieve the goal(s). The plan should be clear enough to offer direction and reassure the employees of a course of action. At the same time, it should be flexible enough so that it can adapt to the changing needs of the customer.

Objective 3) How can the fire and rescue agency enhance its image to increase public support?

One of the primary problems facing the fire and rescue agency today is "image". The number one priority is to establish good public relations. The fire and rescue agency must shift from providing services to satisfying needs. The agency must work on changing its traditional image of just fighting fires. The public must come to identify the fire and rescue agency as the organization to contact when dealing with any type of emergency situation such as weather related disasters, hazardous spills, and even terrorism. In order to accomplish this task, the public must be made aware of the multitude of additional services

the fire and rescue agency provides. Implementing programs will increase the agency's visibility and interaction within the community.

A concentrated effort must be made to inform and educate the public of the various types of services the agency provides. Implementing a Cadet Firefighting Program, inspecting senior citizens' homes, conducting weekend boater safety classes, administering health care (i.e. vaccinations, blood pressure checks, and changing bandages) within the home, and providing more cost effective medical transport are just a few of the ideas which should be explored for improving community awareness. The only limitations to the types of services the agency provides are the limits of its collective imagination.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The fire and rescue agency must become more progressive in finding out the citizens wants and needs. They must continually institute new programs to increase community involvement. The greater the interaction between the fire and rescue agency and the neighborhood association, the more dependent each becomes. The central focus of the organization must be on customer service. Labor and management must encourage all department members to deliver quality service to the citizens. The success of the organization is directly proportional to each person's commitment to the workforce. The future of the fire and rescue agency relies on increasing the visibility and interaction with the community served.

Examples of successful programs utilized by the Connecticut Department of Fire and Emergency Services that should be implemented by the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency include:

- \*Plan an annual house
- \*Exhibit at a fair
- \*Organize a sporting event and donate proceeds to charity
- \*Hold a holiday food drive
- \*Participate in parades
- \*Offer public awareness training
- \*Plan fire prevention education

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## APPENDIX A



## PEORIA FIRE AND RESCUE AGENCY SURVEY

1. Are you aware of all the services the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency provides?    ☐ Yes        ☐ No
2. Should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency advertise its services to the community? ☐ Yes        ☐ No
3. Should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency charge for some services as an alternative source of funding? ☐ Yes        ☐ No
4. What services would you like to see the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency expand?    ☐ Fire Prevention and Education  
☐ Hazardous Materials  
☐ Emergency Medical Service  
☐ River Rescue  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. At what level of education should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency become more involved?  
☐ Kindergarten  
☐ Grades 1 - 4  
☐ Grades 5 - 8  
☐ Grades 9 - 12
6. How can the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency better meet the needs of your neighborhood association?  
☐ Become members  
☐ Have public meetings at the fire station  
☐ Attend block parties  
☐ Send out questionnaires  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. In the last 12 months, how many times have you needed the services of the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency?  
☐ 0            ☐ 1            ☐ 2            ☐ 3 or more
8. How would you rate the quality of service provided by the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency?    ☐ Excellent            ☐ Above Average  
☐ Average            ☐ Poor
9. Do you feel the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency needs to develop a marketing strategy? ☐ Yes        ☐ No
10. Should the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency seek more input from the community? ☐ Yes        ☐ No

11. How could the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency gain more information concerning the expansion of public services?

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12. What innovative ideas would you like to see implemented by the Peoria Fire and Rescue Agency?

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